From:	Leslie Nicholas
To:	gwen@fromthegut.org
Cc:	Historic District Commission (Staff); Eartogro@gmail.com; zaven.arra@gmail.com
Subject:	[EXTERNAL]Re: Comments on 4100 & 4200 BLOCK LINCOLN STREET "Paint the Street" Project Application
Date:	Monday, July 12, 2021 9:08:27 AM

Thank you so much, Gwen

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jul 12, 2021, at 2:49 AM, "gwen@fromthegut.org" <gwen@fromthegut.org> wrote:
>
> To Whom it May Concern,
>
> Artwork in neighborhoods is a good idea. However, when designing the content and style of those artworks several important factors must be addressed. First are practical concerns: safety and effects on traffic patterns. Proactive, inclusive engagement of the community in the design selection, a transparent and appropriate artist selection process, and the utility and message of the selected design are three of the next most critical considerations. The street painting project for 4100-4200 blocks of Lincoln Street as presented performs poorly on these criteria, and should not be advanced at this time.
>
> While the street painting project presents itself as a potential solution to speeding on Lincoln, its effect on traffic patterns is likely to be negative instead of positive. Certainly a colorful mural will attract more car traffic, not reduce it. Any claim that street paintings reduce speeding is also dubious – a driver using Lincoln as a short might slow on the first pass through a newly painted street, but certainly the novelty will wear off quickly. In fact, the most likely pattern is a combination of slow moving gawkers with continued speeding, resulting in more accidents and danger to pedestrians. Simply painting crosswalks on the street would be a much more effective solution.
>
> More broadly, a neighborhood has an identity, and that identity should be imbued in any public art projects with its boundaries. Knowing that identity requires proactive engagement by artists and community projects developers. The engagement style taken by the current project – a brief meeting mere days before painting is to begin, with a pre-selected design – is not sufficient. How this design is created, which should include input from the community members before the artist even begins to draw, is essential to creating community cohesion and representing a block.
>
> Secondly, who the artist is that creates and executes the painting is also very important. While there are surely many people who are available to paint murals for a fee, there are many others that create street art with a broader urban community vision held carefully in mind. It is this broader consciousness as an art creator that we believe is necessary for any artist creating work for Lincoln Street, both due to its position as a historical district and the history of important Detroit artists on this street.
>
> Finally, and most importantly, what the content of the mural actually represents must be given enough time to be carefully considered. Detroit is a diverse city with many different histories. The designs presented, being based on barn quilts as they are, speak only the midwestern, white, rural experience. We do envision a Detroit where urban farming is large part of our shared identity, but we do not envision this as primarily an experience to be held by people of European descent. We envision a more inclusive city where the history of Native Americans, African Americans, and recent and past immigrants are also highly visible. The mural designs as presented make no effort whatsoever to achieve this goal, and we would be very disappointed to represent Lincoln Street in this way to the Detroit community.
>
> For the reasons above we strongly oppose the currently proposed mural project for Lincoln Street.
>
>
> 4147 Lincoln St.
> Gwen McKay
> Leslie Nicholas

> Matthew Shultz
> Eric Waters
>
>
> <No_Lincoln_St_Mural.pdf>

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